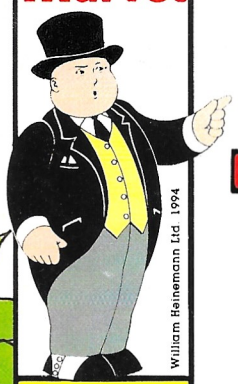
Marvel



William Heinemann Ltd 1994

20th May '94
No172 65p

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS

Based on the Railway Series by The Rev. W. Awdry.

VISIT THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY!
FREE TOKEN INSIDE!

Win a set of Pre-School Toys!

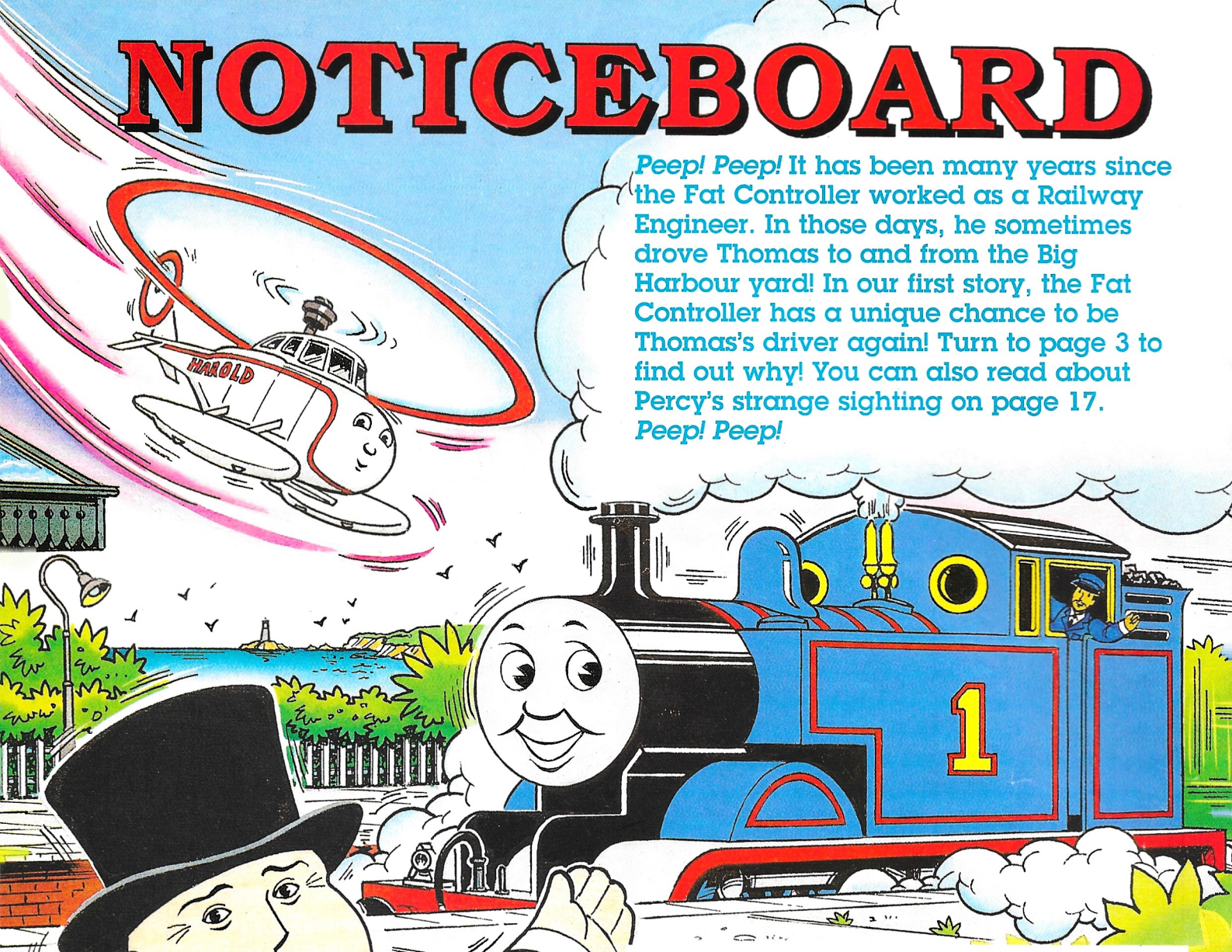
INSIDE!

Who is driving Thomas today?

9 770954 939053 20

NOTICEBOARD

Peep! Peep! It has been many years since the Fat Controller worked as a Railway Engineer. In those days, he sometimes drove Thomas to and from the Big Harbour yard! In our first story, the Fat Controller has a unique chance to be Thomas's driver again! Turn to page 3 to find out why! You can also read about Percy's strange sighting on page 17. *Peep! Peep!*



THIS ISSUE'S COMPETITION!

Turn to page 14 for your change to win the complete set of Thomas Pre-school toys, courtesy of ERTL (UK) Ltd.

OUR NEXT ISSUE!

Don't miss our competition in issue 173! Five lucky prize winners will receive various Railway Sets, courtesy of *Benjamin Toys Ltd.* The first prize, the Island of Sodor playboard is shown on the right!

BENJAMIN TOYS LIMITED

How to obtain your Fat Controller's Card!

If you would like to receive your very own, splendid **Fat Controller's Card**, send one red, yellow and blue token together with your details listed below (details need only be listed on any one of the 3 coloured tokens when applying for this offer) plus a stamped addressed envelope to: **The Fat Controller's Card Offer, Marvel Comics Ltd, 13/15 Arundel Street, London WC2.**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Age .....

Postcode .....

THOMAS TOKEN

ABC AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS CONSUMER PRESS

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS™

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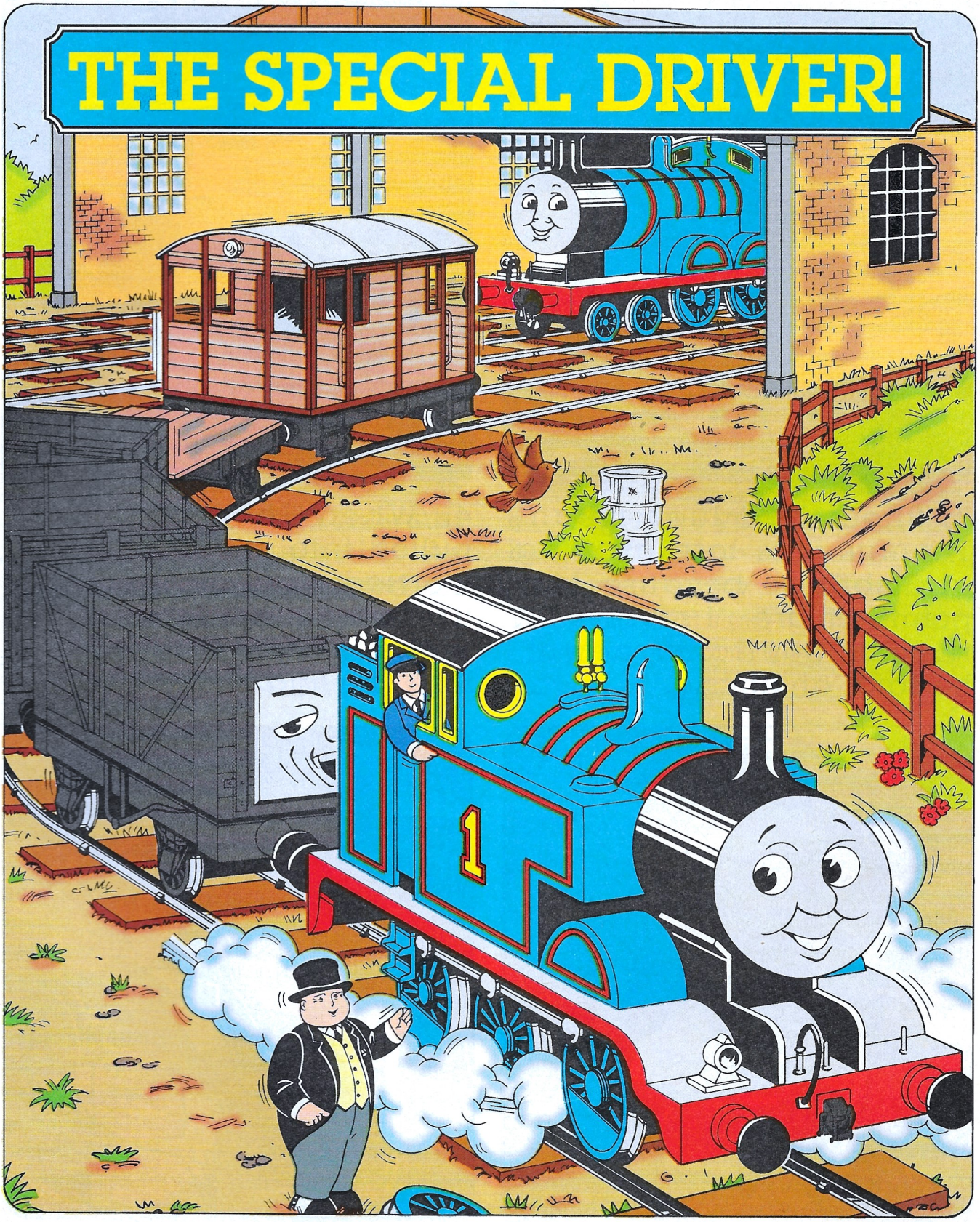
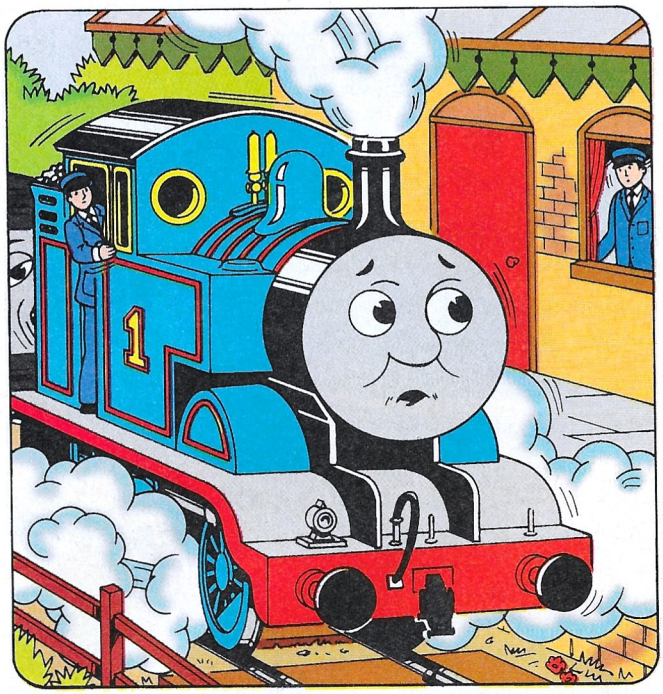
THE SPECIAL DRIVER!

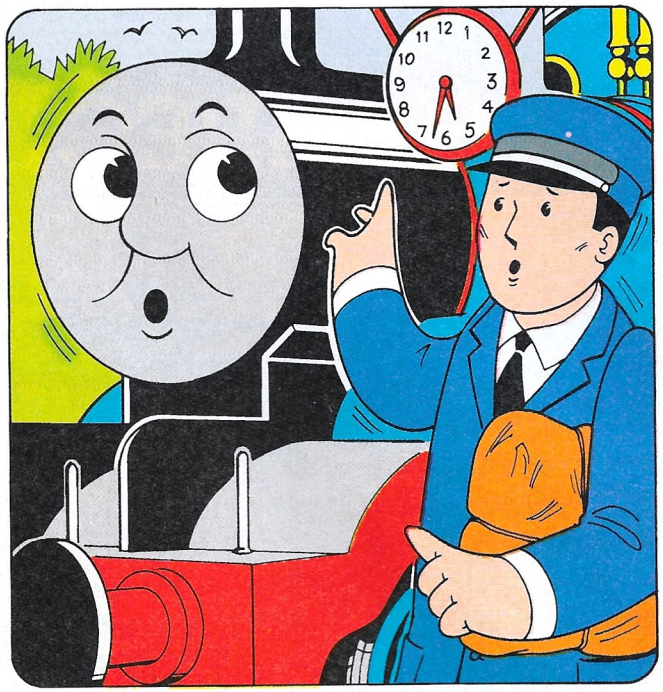


1. One afternoon, Thomas was about to set off with a goods train when the Fat Controller asked him to collect an urgent parcel at Elsbridge Station.

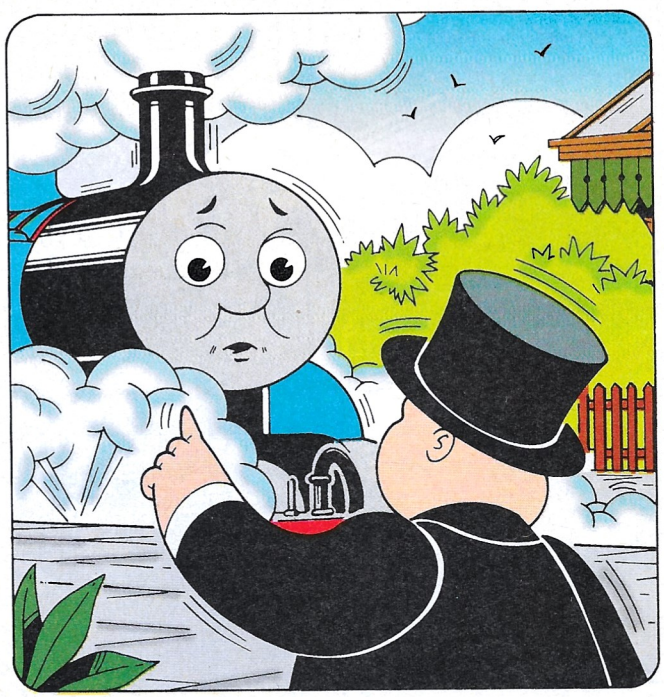
2. "It's a special suit I ordered for the Mayor's grand party at Wellsworth Town Hall tonight," said the Fat Controller. "It's being sent to me by rail!"



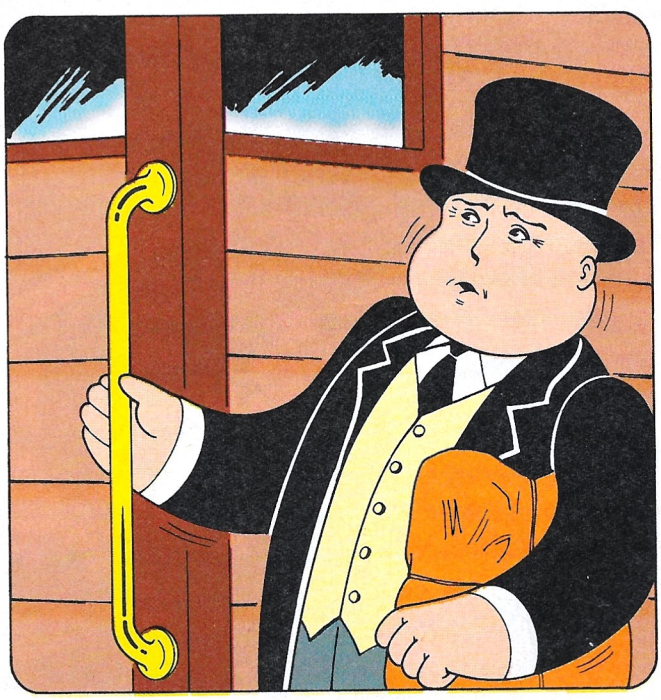
3. Sheer bad luck meant Thomas was late arriving at Elsbridge because of a points failure. "I mustn't let the Fat Controller down!" he said, anxiously.



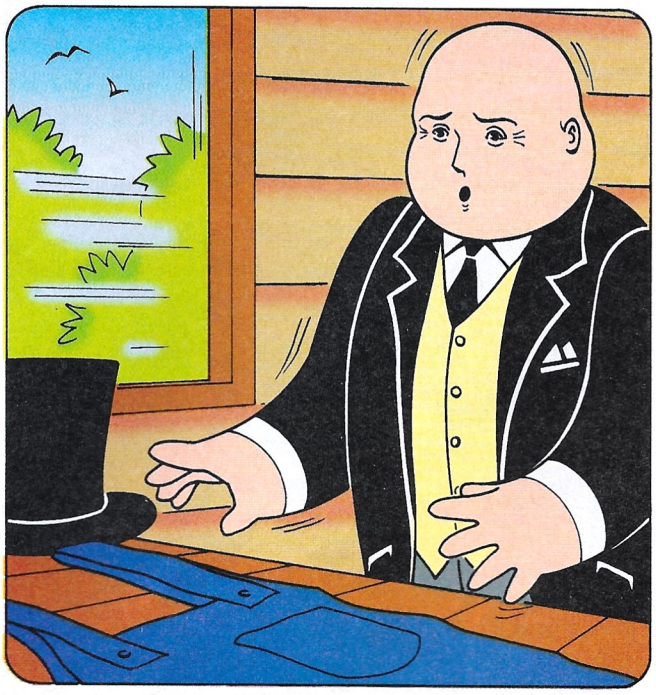
4. When Thomas finally pulled into the station, the worried stationmaster ran up with the important parcel. "There's no time to lose!" he told Thomas.



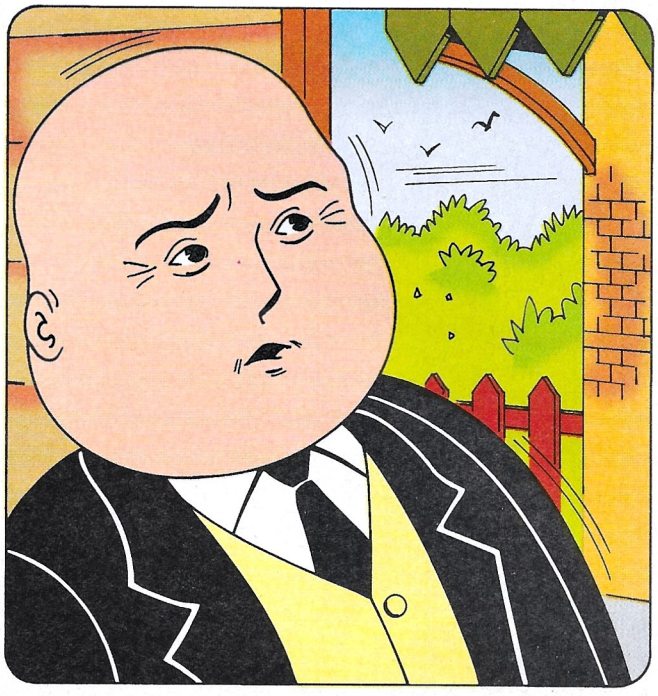
5. With wheels clattering and trucks swaying, Thomas raced back to the Main Station. Puffing hard, he pulled up at last. The Fat Controller was waiting.



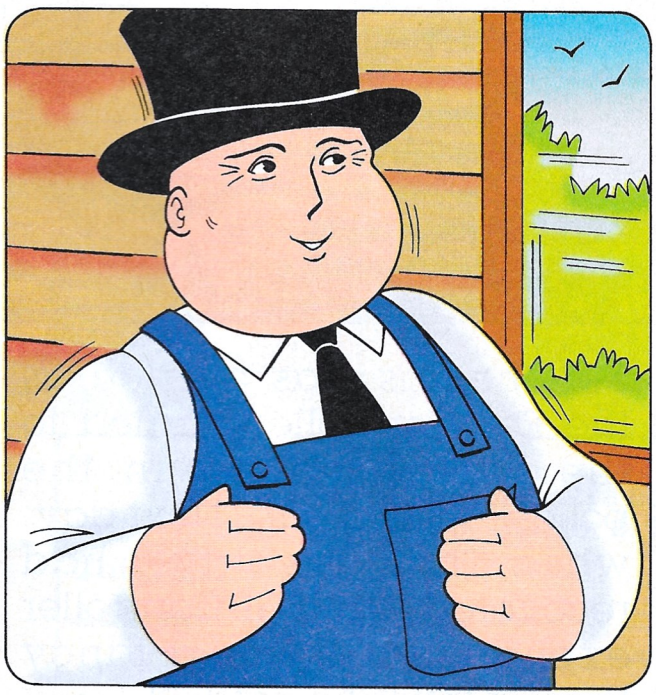
6. "I heard what happened," he said. "If we leave now, I'll just get to the party in time!" Taking the parcel, the Fat Controller boarded Thomas's guard's van.



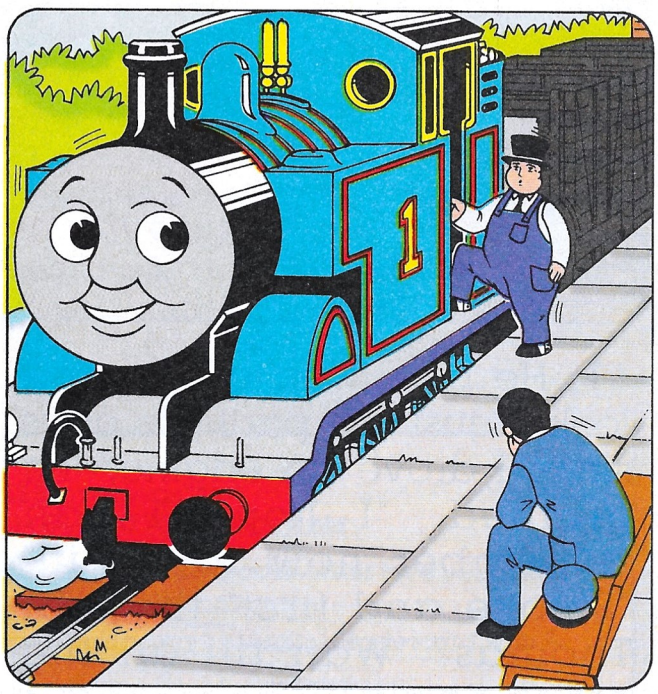
7. "I'll change into this suit on the way!" he said. As Thomas eagerly steamed off once more, the Fat Controller opened the parcel and had a shock.



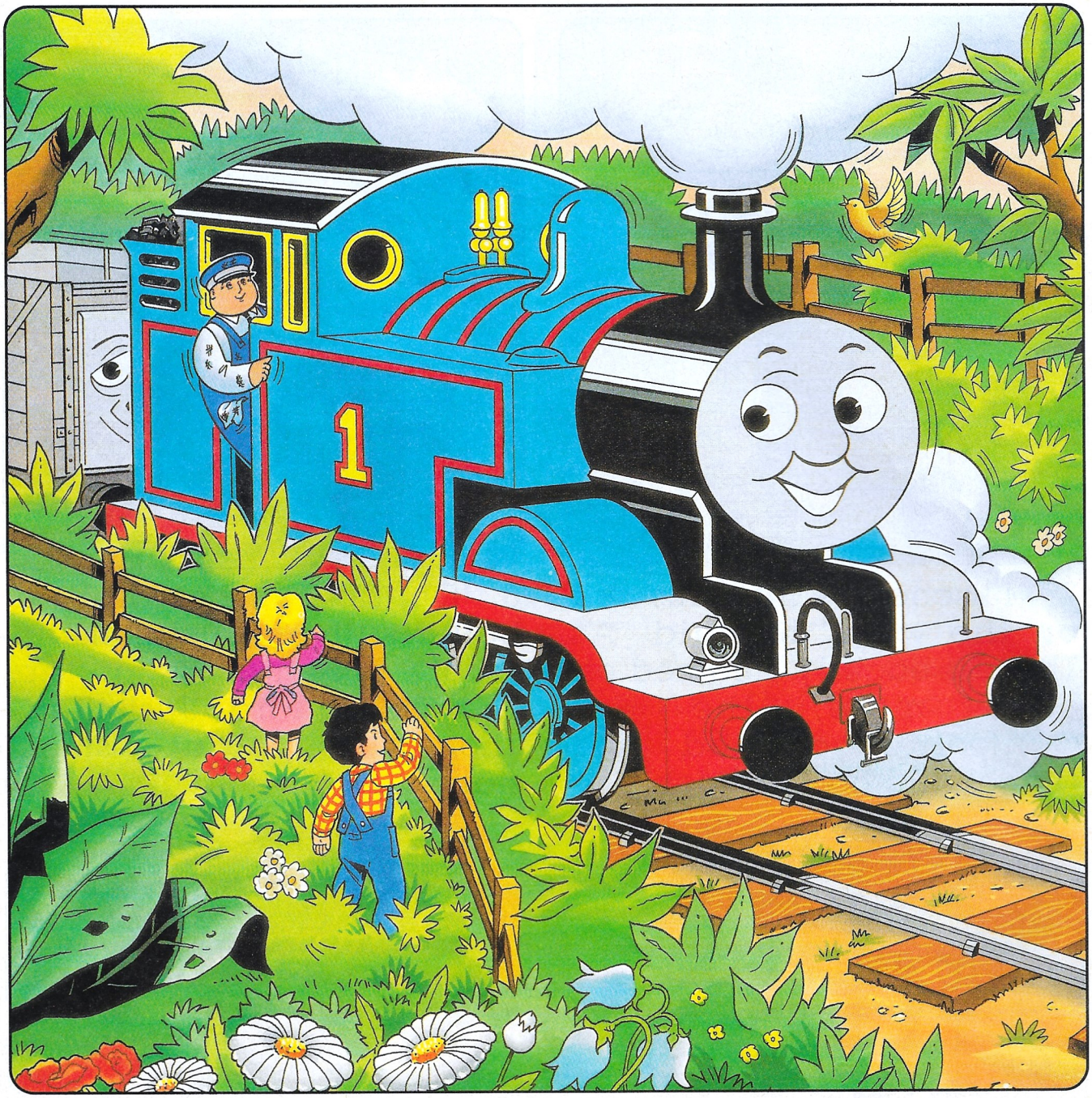
8. "Oh, no! I've been sent a boiler suit by mistake!" he said crossly, showing Thomas's guard. Just then, Thomas stopped at a small station.



9. "The driver is unwell," called the fireman. "I'm sure I'll feel better in a minute," said the driver. The Fat Controller quickly put on the boiler suit.



10. "You must stay here," he told the driver, "while the stationmaster calls a doctor! I shall drive Thomas!" The Fat Controller climbed up into the cab.



11. He borrowed a cap and looked just the part! "It's ages since I drove an engine," he grinned. "I hope I can remember how to do it!" "Smoke and fire!" thought Thomas. "Wait till all the other engines hear about this!" The Fat Controller drove splendidly and Thomas soon reached Wellsworth Station.

12. Thomas was puzzled as the Fat Controller hurried to the Mayor's party in the boiler suit and cap. Next day, when Thomas's driver had recovered, the Fat Controller explained. "It was a fancy dress party!" he said. "I hired a space-suit but went as an engine-driver instead. I really enjoyed driving you, Thomas!" **THE END!**

In our next issue: Thomas and the dinosaur!

A FREE NOTEBOOK AND PENCIL!

Give your child a great present by subscribing to Thomas's very own magazine ...

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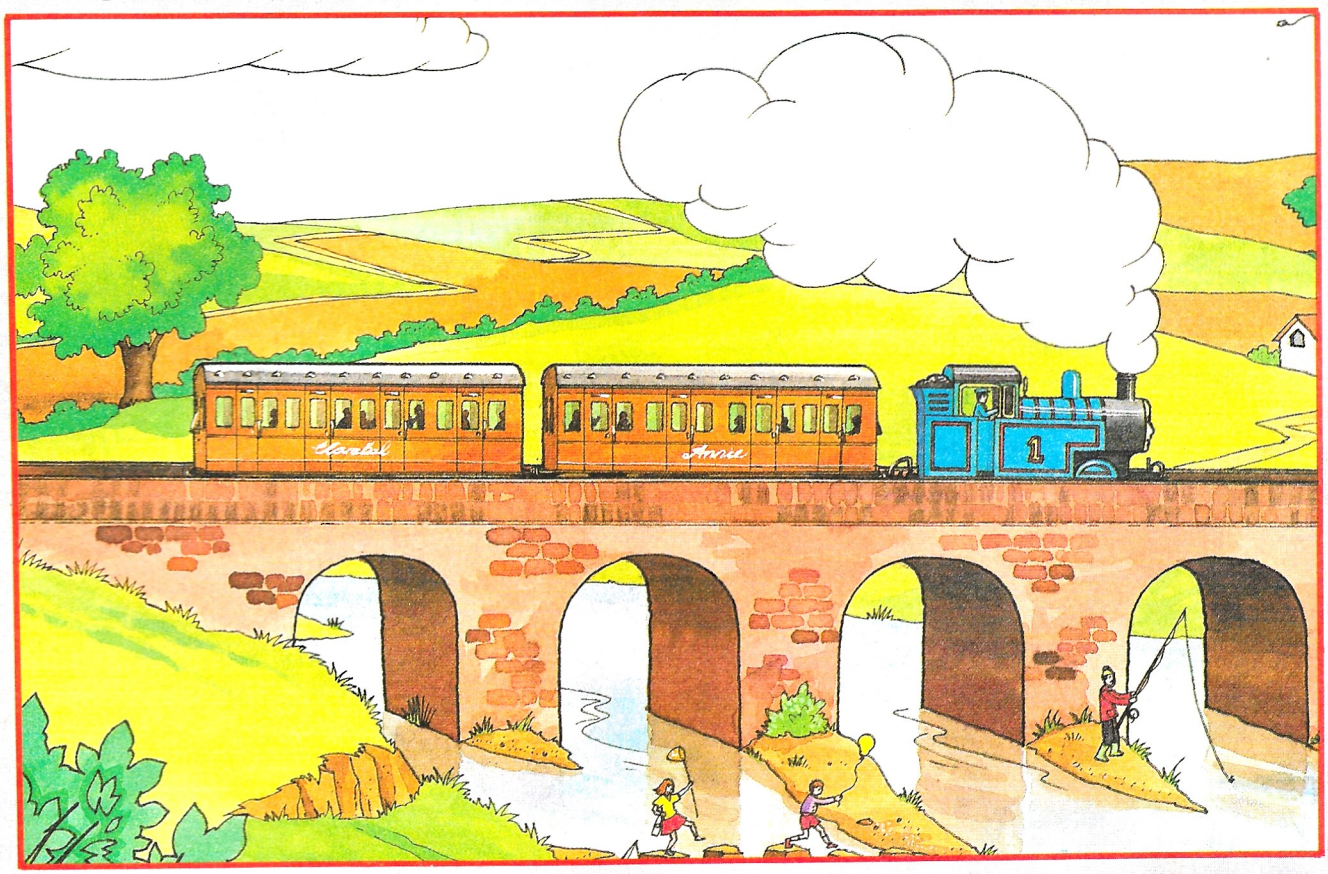
EXTRA WITH SUBSCRIPTION

Your child will receive a FREE Thomas the Tank Engine Notebook and Pencil plus their own personalised **Fat Controller's Card** enabling them to enter special offers and competitions frequently open to **Fat Controller's Card** holders only.



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Please send to: **Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends Subscriptions, PO Box 500, Leicester, LE99 0AA.**

(Tick boxes where appropriate)

POWERFUL PULLING!

There was one task above all others that every engine on the Fat Controller's railway dreamed of doing. It was to pull the Express. Usually, the job was left to Gordon, being the fastest and most powerful engine, and he was very proud of it. But when the Fat Controller sent him to the Works for a service, the next morning James and Henry argued over who should pull the Express until Gordon returned.

"The Fat Controller's sure to ask me," snorted James. "I am such a splendid red engine, with my gleaming paintwork and shiny dome!"

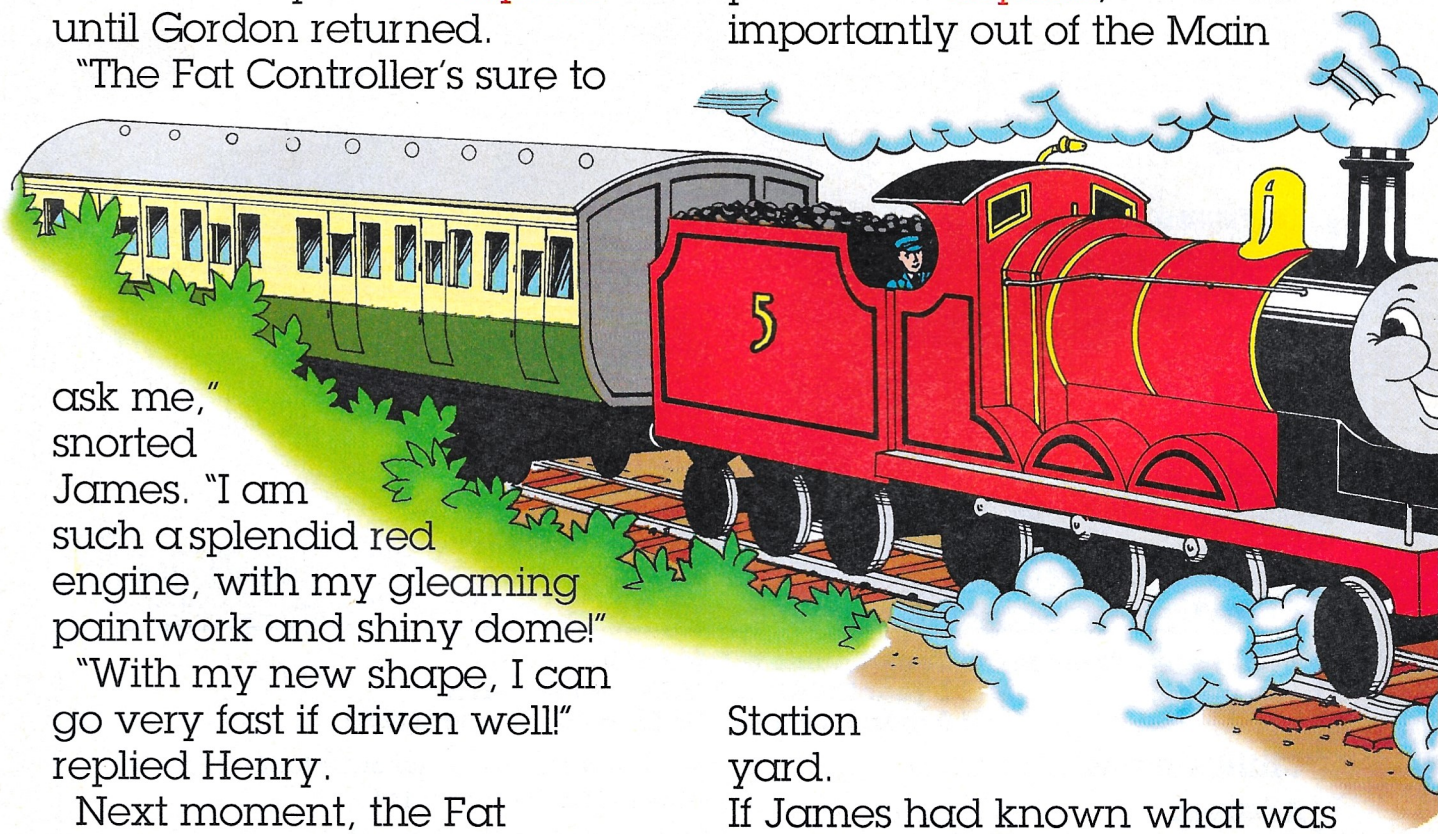
"With my new shape, I can go very fast if driven well!" replied Henry.

Next moment, the Fat Controller entered the shed. James and Henry nearly burst their boilers with excitement while they waited for him to announce which of them would take Gordon's place.

When James was chosen, Henry nearly turned green with envy but, of course, he was that colour already.

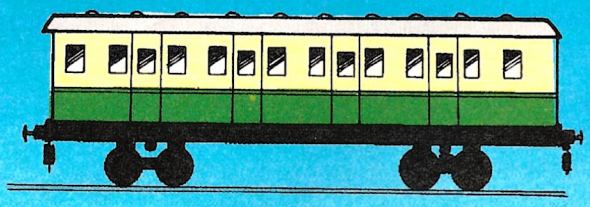
"It's not fair! James pulled the Express the last time Gordon couldn't," he fumed.

"Don't get all steamed up!" sniffed James. "The best engine won!" Henry was jealous but he didn't say another word. After James was coupled to the Express, he rolled importantly out of the Main Station yard.



If James had known what was to happen, he would not have looked so pleased.

On the outward run, he pulled the Express right on time. But, no sooner had he begun the return journey when he sprang a leak in one



of his steam pipes. James went slower and slower until, puffing hard, he just managed to reach the next station.

"Oh, no!" groaned James. "Many of my passengers are on their way to work. They will complain about me if they are late!"

As luck would have it, who should be delivering trucks to a siding in the same station but Henry. The Stationmaster made an urgent phone-call to the Fat Controller and everything was arranged.

Henry quickly backed up and was coupled to the front of James.

"What's going on?" spluttered James, in surprise.

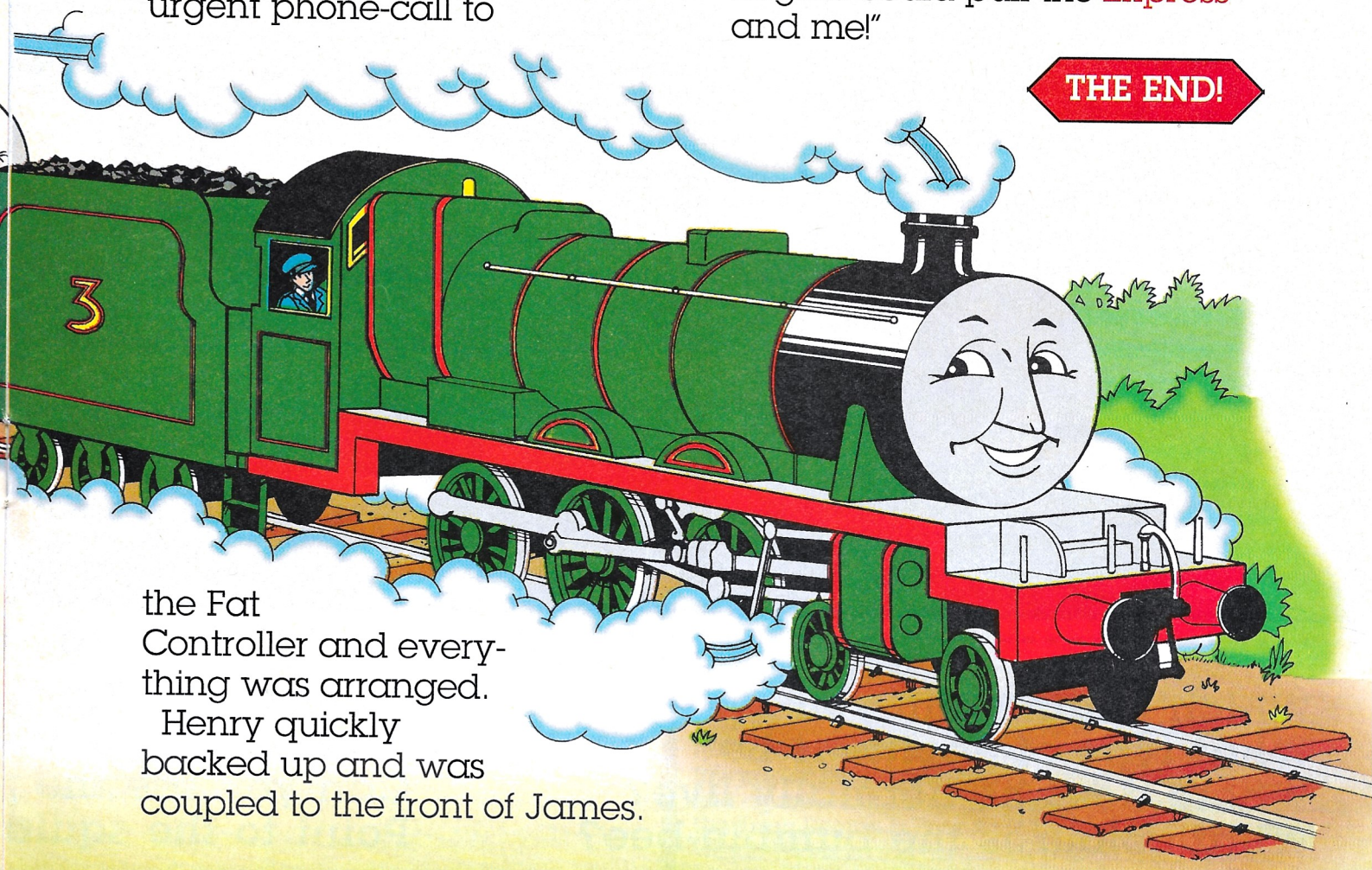
"It seems you can't get all steamed up now," teased Henry, "so I've come to help you!"

Just a few minutes behind schedule, the Express got underway again. Henry pulled hard. He showed James just how fast he could go and soon made up the lost time. The passengers were delighted.

Later, James swallowed his pride and thanked Henry.

"I've pulled the Express more than you have, Henry," he said. "But only a Really Useful Engine could pull the Express and me!"

THE END!



It's games

Which engine can you see?
What type of engine is he?
Where does he normally live?
What colour is the bumble-bee?

Point to the Fat
How many game
Can you see the
Point to the squi

day!

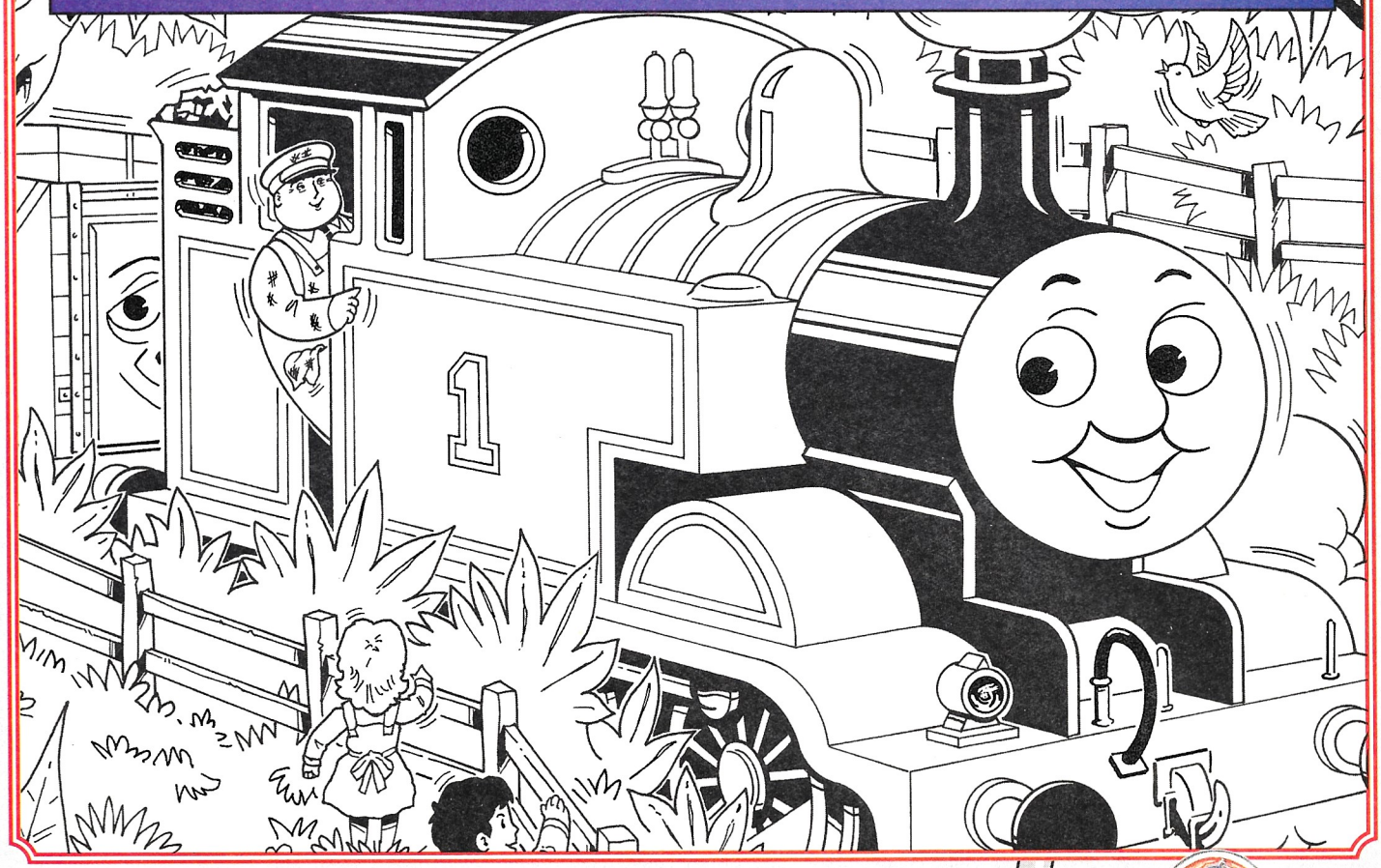
ntroller!
stalls can you see?
icnic basket?
el!

Note for parents

This page is designed to form part of a colourful mural for your child's bedroom, playgroup or classroom. After you have finished reading the comic with your child, remove this part of the centrespread by cutting along the dotted line. There will be a 'mural page' in every issue of **Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends.** Why not collect each one and watch Thomas and his friends puff all round the room!

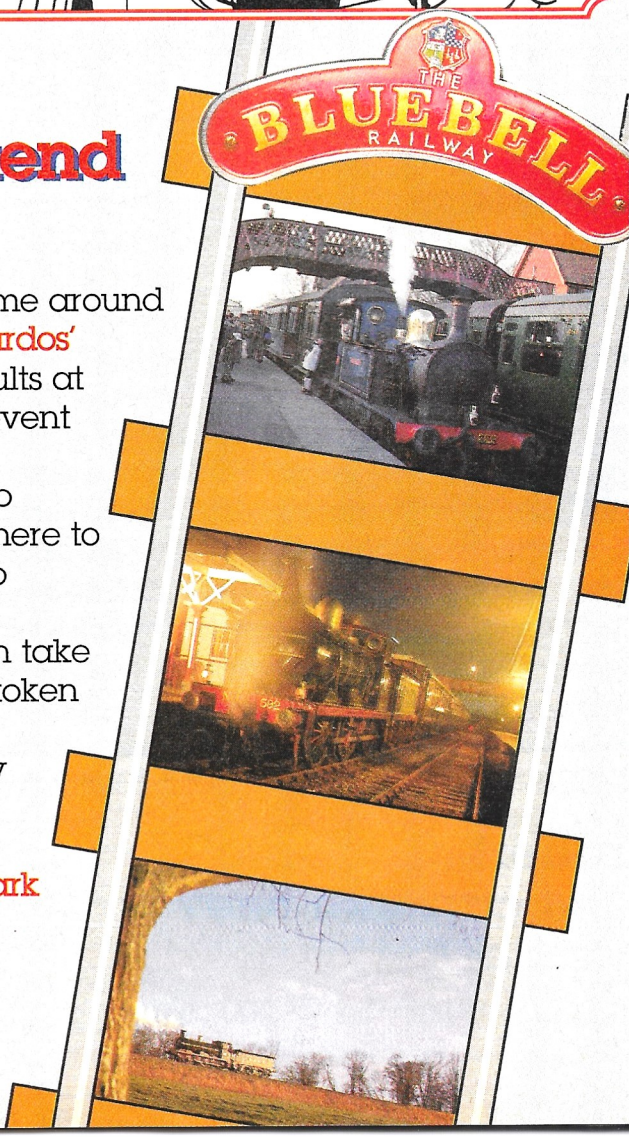
In our next issue: Past the nature trail!

COLOURING TIME!



Why not join us for our 'Friends of Thomas' weekend at the Bluebell Railway!

Every year, the Bluebell Railway organises a theme around the 'Friends of Thomas' at the end of May. Barnardos' organise all the entertainment for children and adults at Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes. Last year, this event attracted about 12,000 people over the three days.
There will be lots of exciting games and activities to take part in and Thomas the Tank Engine will be there to greet everyone. Children and adults will be able to operate trains themselves on our model railway.
There will also be two raffles, one of which you can take part in once you have exchanged the collectable token printed on this page for a raffle ticket.
Families can pre-book their tickets from the railway ticket office on 0825 724114.
The 'Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine' weekend will take place at the Bluebell Railway, Sheffield Park Station, Nr Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 3QL on 28th, 29th, and 30th May 1994.



Free Token
Barnardos

JOIN THE DOTS!

Who are the grandchildren feeding today?
Join the dots and then you can say!

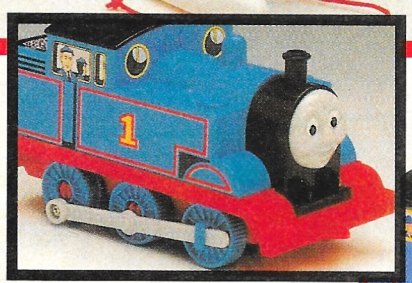
Pre-School Competition!
Token No. 2

WIN!

THE THOMAS PRE-SCHOOL RANGE!

Our special prize winner will receive the complete range which includes the Thomas Remote Control, Bubble Walker, Sit'n Ride Walker, Teaching Clock, Night Light, Shape Sorter, Percy with set of Trucks, Toby with set of Trucks PLUS the Pull-a-Long Harold and Bump'n Go Engine
(also shown separately)

ERTL



HOW TO ENTER!

How well do you remember your favourite Thomas stories? We need you to answer the following questions about two well known stories!

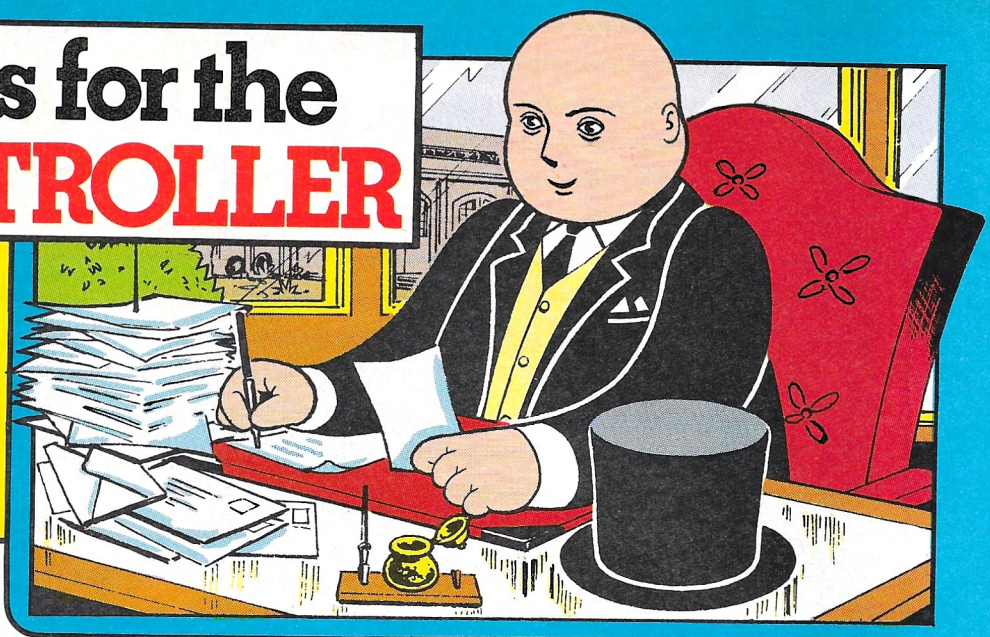
(a) What is the name of the green Saddle Tank Engine who became the Ghost Engine?

(b) One day, Thomas had a famous race with one of his new friends! This friend has a shiny red coat and he travels by road. What is his name?

Send your answers on a postcard to: Thomas Pre-School Range Competition, Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends, Marvel Comics Ltd., 13-15 Arundel St., London WC2R 3DX by June 3rd 1994.

This competition is open to all readers other than employees of Marvel Comics Ltd and ERTL (UK) Ltd. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence shall be entered into.

Your letters for the FAT CONTROLLER



Have you got an amusing story to tell? Do you have a question you would like to ask about Thomas or his friends? If so, then write to me at the address shown below! I would be so very pleased to hear from you!

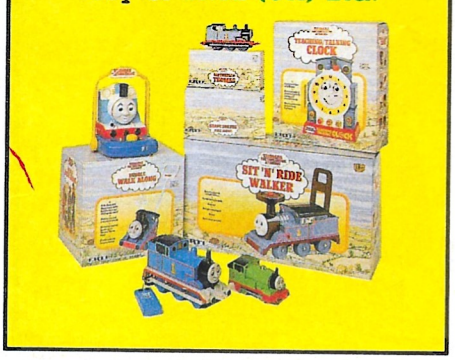
STAR LETTER!

Dear Fat Controller,
My mummy often takes me to see Thomas and his friends at the *Swanage Railway* and every time we go, I learn something new about trains. This time, I watched Thomas being filled up with water. Can you tell me where the water goes ?

Love from **Brett**, aged 3.

Once the water has run into Thomas's boiler, it is heated when the guard lights the coal furnace. This turns the water into steam which then moves the connecting rods attached to Thomas's wheels!

The sender of any letter that is printed as our **STAR LETTER** will win some splendid **Thomas Pre-school** toys courtesy of *ERTL (UK) Ltd.*



THE FASTEST ENGINE!

Dear Fat Controller,
My name is Christopher and my little brother Matthew and I both like Thomas and his friends! My favourite engine is Thomas and Matthew 's favourite engine is Percy. But, who is the fastest train on the Island of Sodor?

Love from **Christopher Cuerden**, aged 5.

Thomas is built to go faster than Percy as he is a Saddle Tank Engine. Gordon the Big Express Engine is by far the fastest and most powerful engine on my railway.

USEFUL DIESEL!

Dear Fat Controller,
Has Diesel ever done anything Really Useful like Thomas, or does he just like playing tricks and being oily all the time?

Love from **Guy Mayhew**, aged 2.

Diesel is well known for stirring up trouble in the engine shed and especially at the Big Harbour yard! But there are occasions when I need a strong engine to pull heavy loads. That is when Diesel becomes a Very Useful Engine, as he is very powerful indeed!

BIRTHDAYS!

Matthew John Crump, David Bowden, Sam Mercer, Edward Martin, Claire Larcombe, Amy Richards, Shane Harry Daddo, John Lee Clarke, Steven Alderson, Nick Robinson, Jay Stuckey, Peter William Goffey, Richard Holland, Richard Green, David Rowan Edorall, Anthony George Rosier, Richard Colley, Jamie Harvey, David Tinley, Angus Prosser, and belated greetings to Carl Kenneth Allen, Robert Cooper, Robert and Katie Green, Brian Brown, Daniel Peet, Michael David Durell and Sarah Howells.

If you would like a birthday mention printed in one of our future issues, please send details on a post-card at least **nine weeks** in advance.

Yours,

Sir Topham Hatt

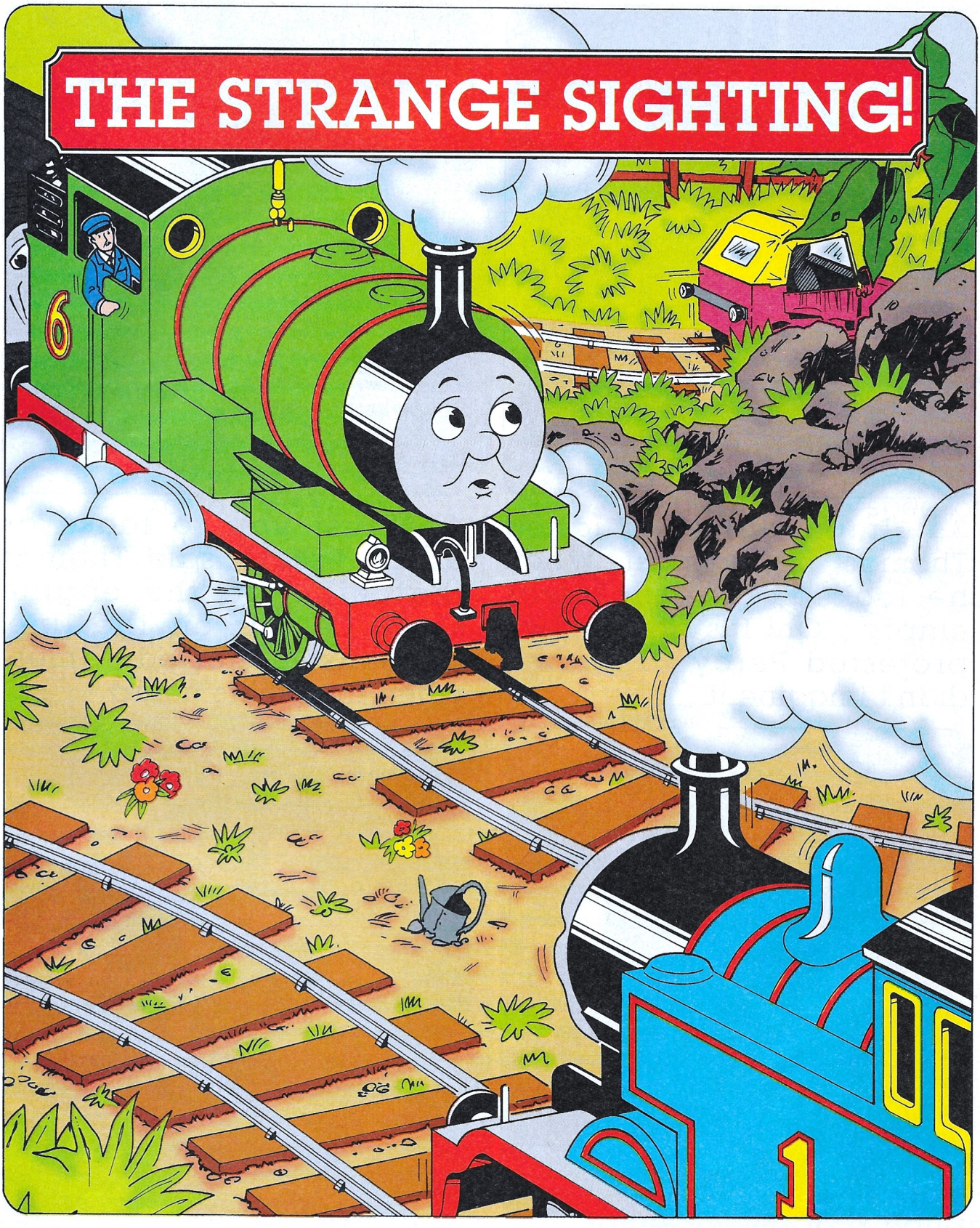
The Fat Controller!

Send your letters to:

The Fat Controller
The Island of Sodor
c/o Marvel Comics Ltd
13/15 Arundel Street
London WC2.

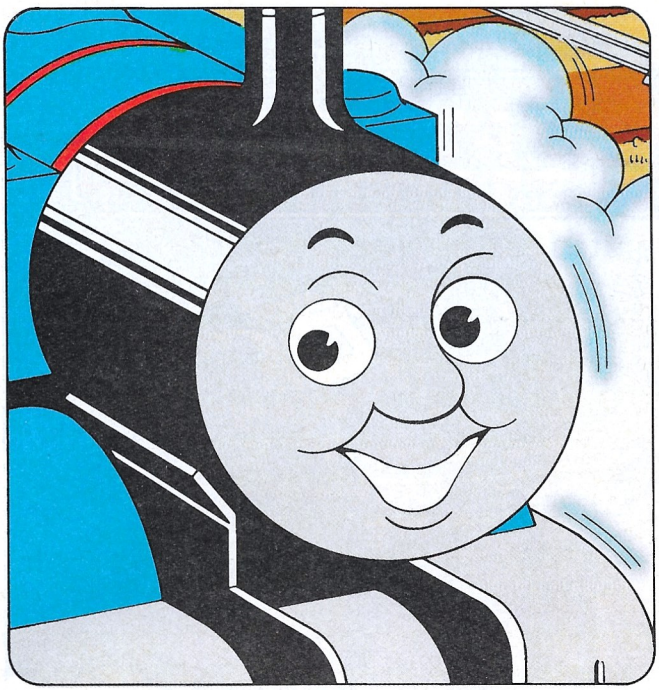
PUZZLE TIME!

Look at this splendid puzzle! Lot's of things are attached to strings, but who's got what?

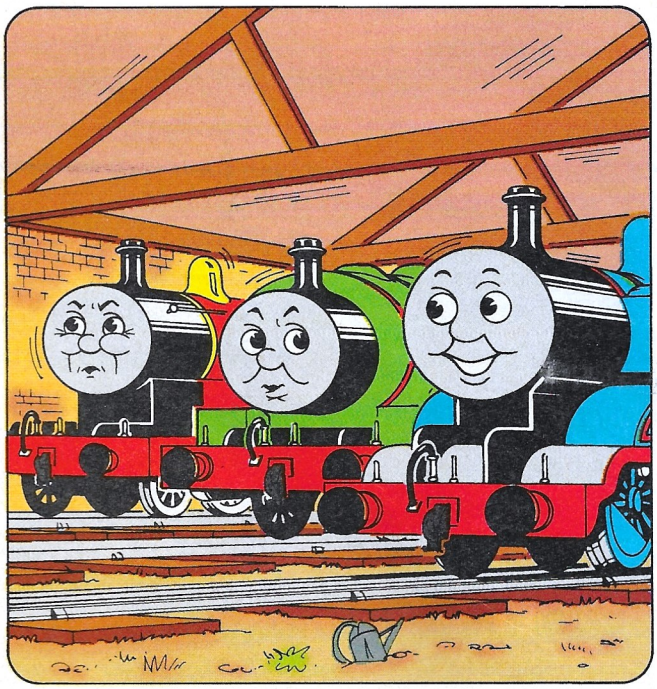


1. With Edward and Henry at the Works for repairs, there was even more work than usual for the other engines. Percy was helping Thomas on his branch line.

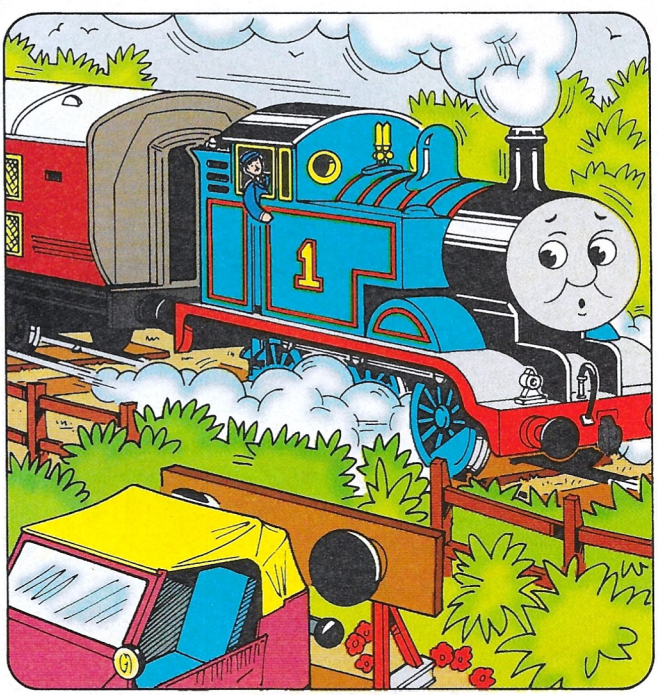
2. As they both met near a junction, Percy suddenly stared in astonishment. "Smoke and fire!" he cried. "Someone's driving a motor car on the other line!"



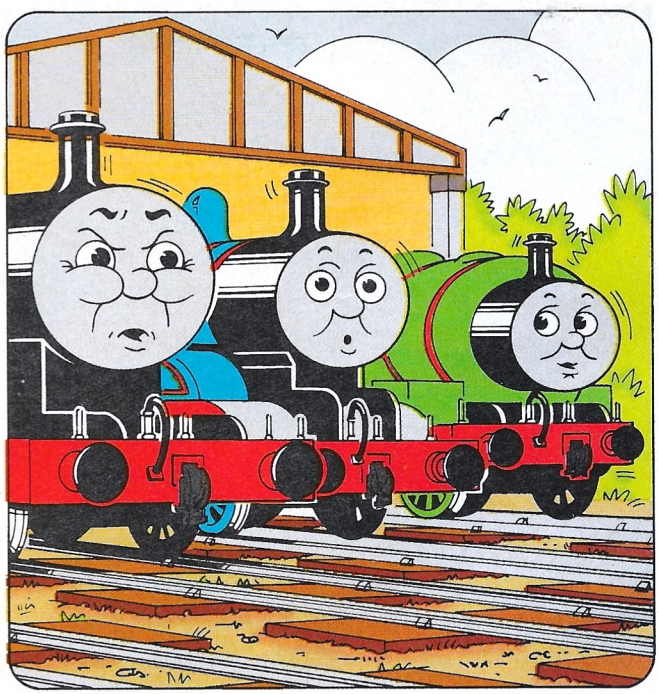
3. "Impossible!" laughed Thomas, rolling past. When he looked, the track was empty. "Oh! It's gone now!" protested Percy. "I know I didn't imagine it!"



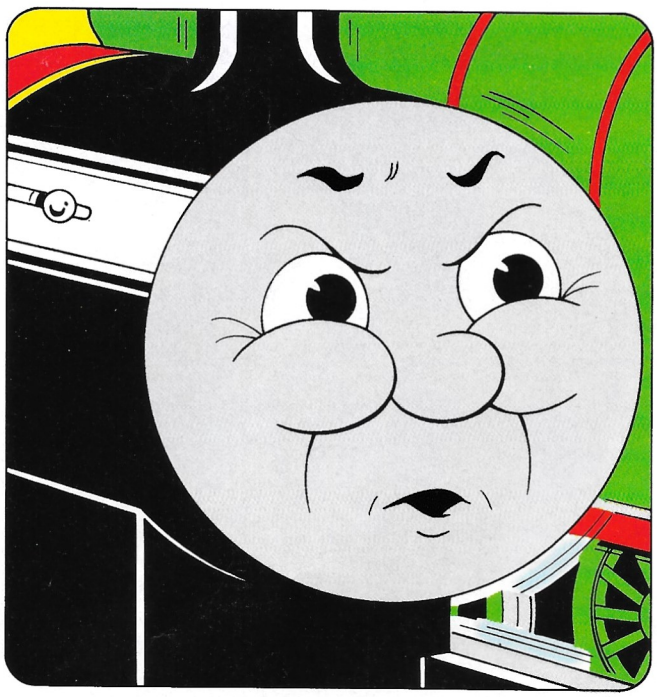
4. "Trust you to tease as usual, Percy!" said Thomas that night in the engine shed. "A car on the line! Nonsense!" snorted James, when the others heard.



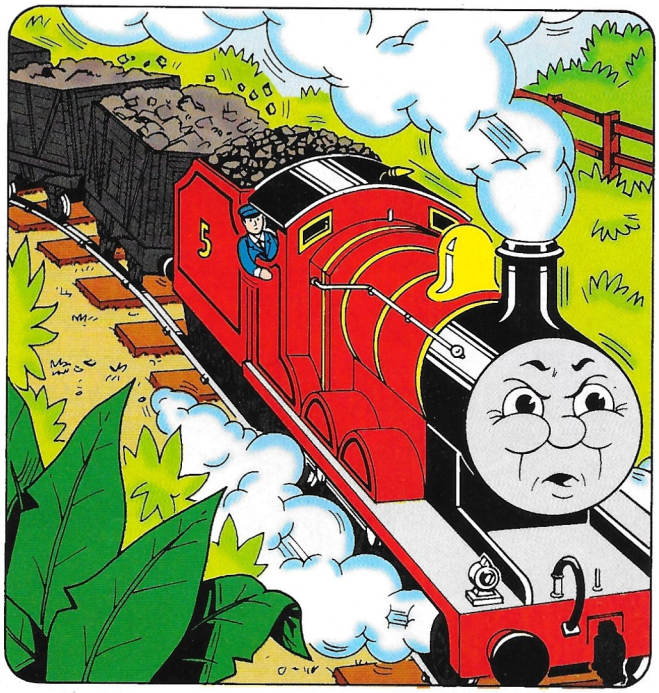
5. "Everyone knows cars run on roads, not rails!" he added. Next morning, Thomas was taking the post train when he glimpsed the mystery car in a siding.



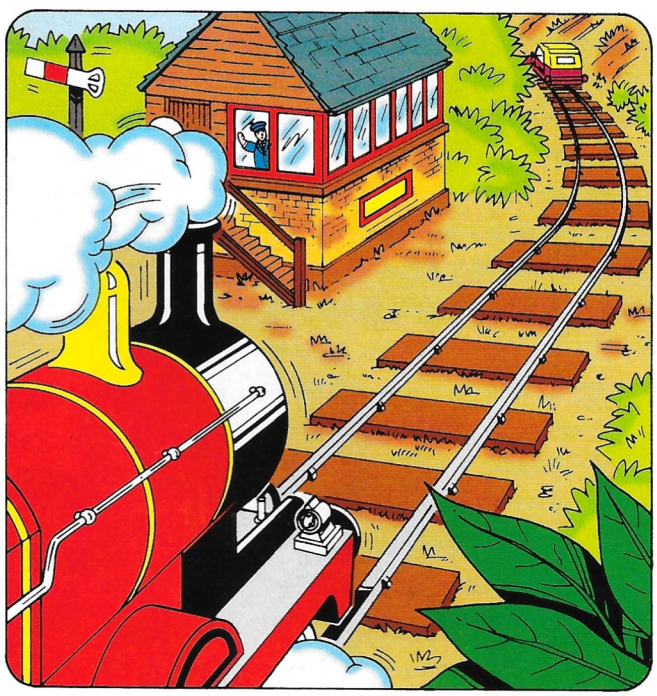
6. During the day, some of the other engines spotted it, as well. After work, they all talked excitedly about the car. "Now do you believe me?" asked Percy.



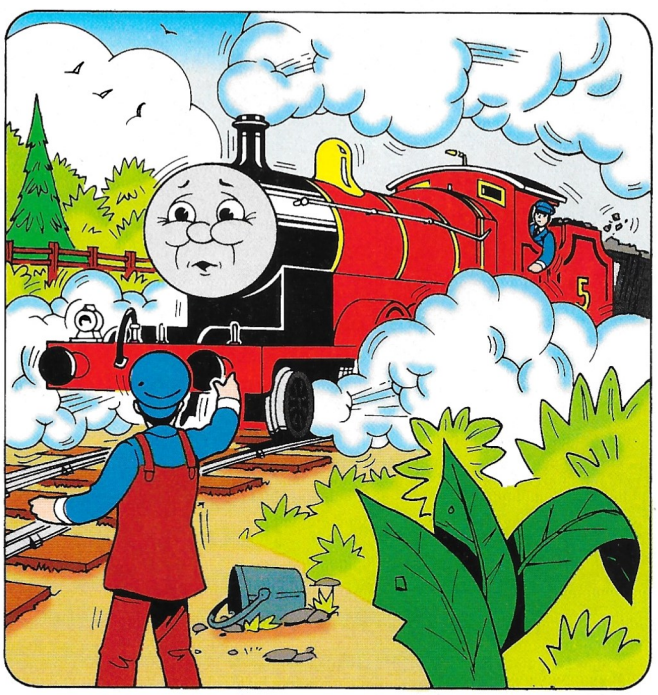
7. "I'd have to see it first!" huffed James, in a bad mood. "I've been told to pull trucks tomorrow. A fine red engine like me, should only carry passengers!"



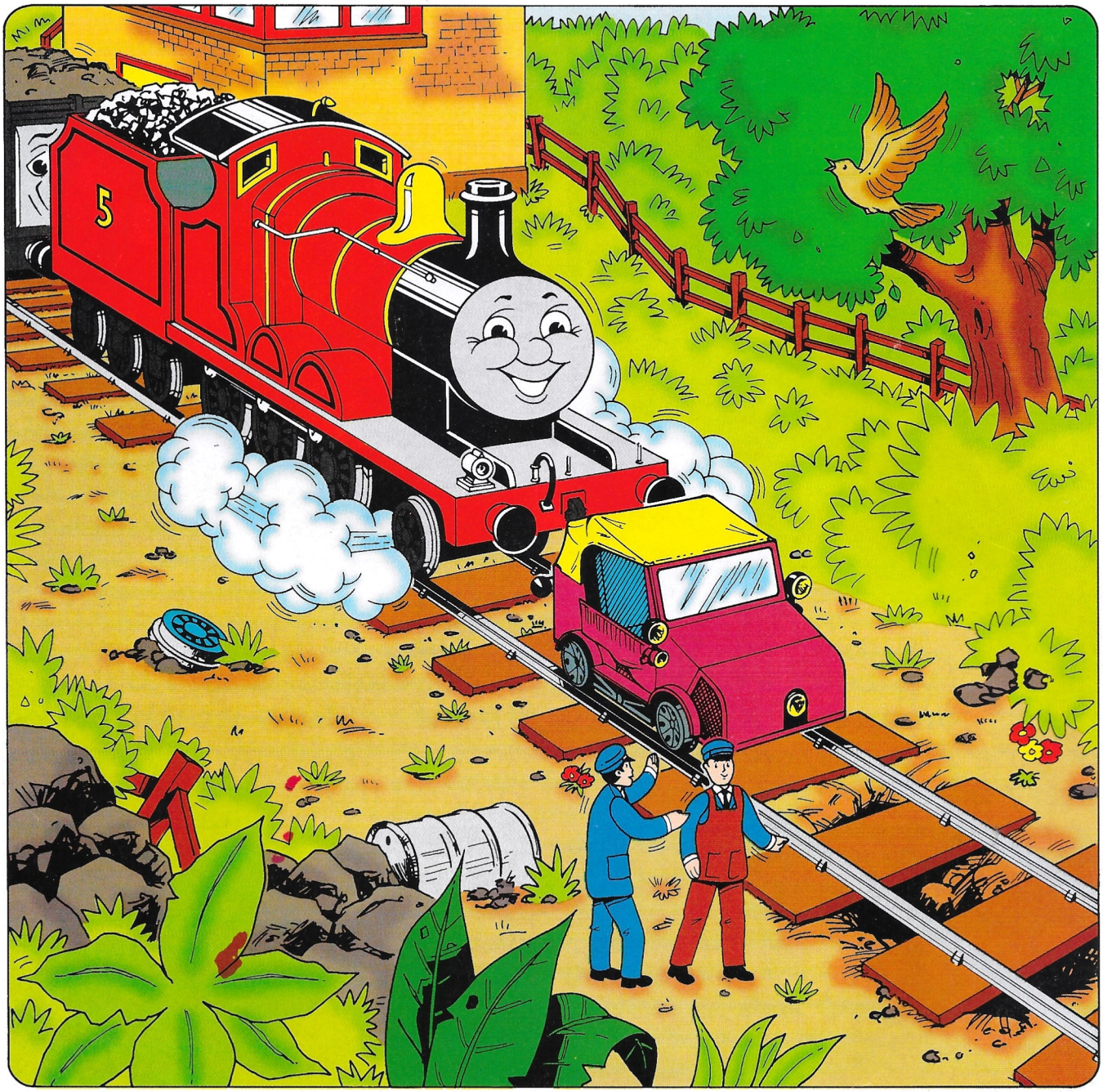
8. Next morning, he sped off irritably so his troublesome trucks clattered and bumped about. "Slow down! Slow down!" they cried. James ignored them!



9. As he puffed around a bend, James suddenly saw a signal ahead was at stop. Beyond it was a signalbox and, on the track, stood a strange little vehicle.



10. James hissed to a halt in a cloud of steam, with wheels squealing and trucks juddering. "What's wrong?" they asked. "A car on the track!" spluttered James.



11. "I nearly crashed into it!" he added. But James was wrong. An engineer approached. "That's not a car but a special trolley borrowed from the mainland railway to inspect the lines, as the engines are too busy to do the work," James heard him say. "But for that trolley, you would have been derailed!"

12. The engineer showed James's driver a section of track ahead that was dangerous to run over. "I spotted it from the trolley and managed to warn the signalman in time!" he said. "I knew it couldn't be a real car Percy saw!" said James. "I'm glad I took the trucks today, because I've solved the mystery!"

THE END

In our next issue: Annie at sea!